

Grand Haven Area Public Schools Beacon

Summer 2023

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The GHHS Science Olympiad team took first place at the state tournament and placed 13th at nationals this year. Way to go, Bucs!



Photo credit: Grand Haven Tribune

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Board Meeting Schedule

- Monday, July 17, 2023
@ Grand Haven Education Service Center
- Monday, August 14, 2023
@ Grand Haven Education Service Center

All board meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

www.ghaps.org

Resilience. Grit. Determination.

These are just a few of the words that come to mind when I reflect on this past school year marked by countless important wins.

I think of staff and teachers, digging deep to help one another and making sure every student gets the support they need. I think of our students, working hard to achieve their goals – in their classrooms, on the field, on stage and out in the community.

To say that I am humbled by their commitment and progress is an understatement.

On May 2, the Grand Haven community affirmed its support of quality education by renewing the district's annual non-homestead operating millage. We are grateful for more than 20 years of overwhelming community support. Thus, we can plan for the continuation of many excellent GHAPS programs and services.

The bond, however did not pass. The needs identified in the proposal remain, and we are moving the district forward by finding creative ways to address our most urgent needs with resources we currently have.

We stand committed to our relentless pursuit of Success for All, and genuinely appreciate the value that Grand Haven places on academic excellence.

Thank you, Grand Haven, for your ongoing involvement, support and commitment to the students and families we serve.

Scott Grimes
Superintendent



Being a Buc Doesn't End at Graduation

We all understand the responsibility we have to nurture, educate and invest in our children today so that they can be the adults that our world needs tomorrow. Commencement is just the beginning, and generations of graduates have gone on to do big things out in the world and right here at home.

Becca Addison, Class of 2009, is a dietitian specializing in disordered eating. Derek DeYoung, Class of 1999, is enriching people's appreciation for nature through his phenomenal art. Navy Commander Brent Jackson, Class of 1997, has circumvented the globe to serve our country. And the Class of 1995's Chris Streng is making a big impact right here at home as a public servant and vice president of the GHAPS Board of Education.

Despite graduating as many as 14 years apart, the four share similar views about what it means to be a Buccaneer. They describe a culture built on a solid work ethic and high expectations; the breadth of opportunities; and parents, teachers and coaches who care. These all contribute to the solid ground on which they stand today.

Becca Addison was a standout athlete on the GHHS cross-country and track & field teams.

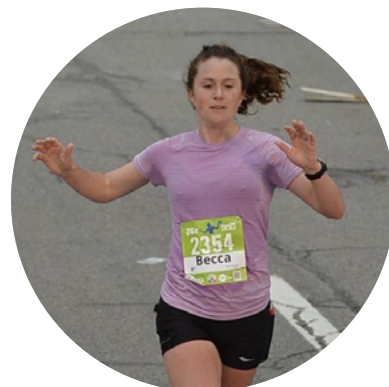
"The coaches were excellent. GHAPS had the best of everything and the new track was installed my sophomore year," she recalls.

Addison received a full scholarship to the University of Michigan, where she earned her bachelor's in kinesiology and Master of Public Health and Nutrition, along with multiple championship titles with the Wolverines' cross country and track and field teams.

Now, Addison works at Rhode Island's only clinic for the treatment of disordered eating, an intensive outpatient program that serves all ages. "I'm on a team with therapists and we see clients several times a week. We eat nourishing meals together. The cases can be hard, but it's a very collaborative environment," explains Addison.

"Body image is a big part of running culture. It's made me passionate about helping others who are experiencing disordered eating," she explains. "It's rewarding when a client takes what we've talked about and does the hard work. Often, they just need someone to listen and be supportive."

Though she officially retired from running in 2018, Addison ran and won the Detroit Marathon in October 2021 and will run another in Minnesota next month. "I love the structure of training. And when I'm not training, it's a good way to get outside and get the benefits of exercise."



After graduation, Derek DeYoung attended Grand Rapids Kendall College of Art and Design on scholarship. It was there he met his now-wife and partner Janell, and the pair set off after graduation to travel and see the world. Now, they share time between the Florida Keys and their cabin on Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay, visiting Grand Haven several times a year.

Long before he became a professional artist, or even a student, DeYoung was a fisherman. "People who fish turn it into something that reflects their personalities. You can tell a lot about a person by their fly or tackle box." Fishing can be a sport, a hobby, a science, or in his case – an art.



DeYoung has always been known as “the artist” by his peers and teachers. He says his art teachers encouraged his development. “It’s so easy to think you’ve got to please everybody. Art flies in the face of pleasing everybody,” he says. “They showed me how to be an artist without even realizing it.”

DeYoung had a rare opportunity to leave his mark on GHHS, quite literally. “In 1998, the senior class hired me to paint a Buccaneer mural on the new high school gym wall as their class gift to the school,” he recalls.

Now, DeYoung paints his own vision of the environment, fish and natural life that he loves. “My hope is that my art influences others to see the beauty and value of wildlife and the environment, and inspire them to protect it.”

Navy Commander Brent Jackson graduated from GHHS as an honor student and multisport varsity athlete. He went on to play football and study political science at Kalamazoo College, his sights ultimately set on working for the FBI or CIA.

“By my junior year I knew that the military would be my best entry point into those careers. Both of my grandfathers served in World War II, and I respected and was enamored by that,” he explains.

Growing up on the shores of Lake Michigan, Jackson found himself most drawn to the U.S. Navy—but only after thoroughly researching every branch. “In March of my senior year, I committed to the Navy on my parents’ back porch.”

Commander Jackson is a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) who has proudly served aboard a multitude of ships in a variety of positions. “In my last sea tour, I was very fortunate to serve as Captain of a 510-foot guided missile destroyer. That was an extremely rewarding tour,” he recalls.

He’s also earned two Master of Science degrees in Global Leadership and National Security Strategy. His numerous commendations include six Meritorious Service Medals and four Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medals.

“Grand Haven is my bedrock,” he explains. “There were constant touchpoints of authority. Teachers, coaches, at church, in class, on the field. There was structure, guidance and opportunities. I was well prepared, and appreciated the opportunity to travel the world, experience other cultures, and serve alongside great Americans from all walks of life.”



Pole vaulter Chris Streng is making his big impact right here in Grand Haven, but not without a few worldly adventures first. Like generations of Strengs before him, “When the nation needed us, we served,” he shares.

“It was my pole vault that helped me land admission to the U.S. Naval Academy, but the breadth of opportunities at GHAPS definitely helped me develop as a leader and gave me a strong foundation.”

Streng credits his family, teachers, and GHAPS’ academic rigor for the strong start. “I still remember my teachers and the impact they had on me,” he says. “I was prepared for the Naval Academy’s tough curriculum and deployment in the second Iraq war because of it.”

Following six years of active duty, Streng and his wife Kristi, GHHS Class of 1996, returned home in time for their oldest child to start kindergarten at Mary A. White Elementary School. The Strengs now have seven busy Buccaneers of their own; the two oldest graduated from GHHS and now attend the U.S. Air Force Academy and the University of Michigan.

“Grand Haven has always been home to us,” he says.

Streng is vice president of the GHAPS Board of Education where he’s served for six years. He’s certified by the Michigan Association of School Boards, and regularly attends training and conferences to develop in his role as a school board member.



2022 GHHS Hall of Fame Inductees

The Grand Haven High School Hall of Fame, established by the Grand Haven Schools Foundation in 2008, honors the achievements of alumni in a variety of areas. Held every three years, the next induction ceremony will be in November 2025.



Athletic Achievement

- 2010 Girls Cross Country Team
- Rebecca Addison, Class of 2009
- Douglas Poort, Class of 1956, (deceased)
- John Sluka, Class of 1961

Career/Academic Accomplishments

- John H. Beernink, M.D., Class of 1957
- Brent Jackson, Class of 1997

Service to GHAPS/Society

- Brent A. Boyink, Class of 1958 (deceased)
- Leon Stille, Class of 1957

Cultural/Performing Arts

- Derek DeYoung, Class of 1999
- Paul Trap, Class of 1980

Honorary Award for Service to GHAPS

- Robert Monetza
- Randy Poel

2023 Excellence in Service Awards

The district's 40th annual Excellence in Service Awards honor teachers, staff and volunteers for their extraordinary commitment and service to Grand Haven Area Public Schools.

- Melissa Meyers**, GHHS music and orchestra teacher and director
- Sarah McElrath**, Lakeshore Middle and White Pines Intermediate schools, media specialist
- Matt Mulvahill**, Robinson Elementary, 3rd grade teacher
- Dawn Kelley**, administrative assistant to the superintendent
- Kelly Ohlendorf**, administrative assistant to the director of special education



Growth-Focused Initiatives

The 2022-23 school year looked a lot more like “normal” at GHAPS. But if you dig a little deeper, you’ll see the extraordinary work being done in classrooms throughout the district to help students recover lost ground.

Half of the country’s students have fallen behind grade level in at least one core subject. It’s a challenge the district is rising to meet by getting back to basics and investing in what works.

GHAPS Curriculum Director Mary Jane Evink explains, “We all experienced the pandemic, but we all experienced it differently. The environment that students need has changed from what we knew before.”

The district continues to invest in proven math and English language arts recovery programming. Teams of recovery specialists are in place for both math and English. Ongoing teacher training, math manipulatives, and online tools are among the resources aimed at accelerating learning.

“Emotional and mental health supports for students and staff remain in place, but we’ve been able to focus more intentionally on individual student learning as they’ve adjusted to classroom learning and behaviors,” Evink says.

Responsive online tools meet students where they’re at, and serve the dual purpose of providing teachers with invaluable data that allows them to tailor instruction, teach the material in a variety of ways, and accommodate individual learning styles.

Well-developed, tried-and-true professional learning communities (PLC) serve as the district-wide foundation. Fueled by passionate educators, these communities are hubs of collaboration, data sharing and analysis, ideation, creativity and solutions.

“Each school is active in these practices. We’re growing together as teams and uncovering new strategies to address unfinished learning,” says Evink. “It’s going to take a while to catch up, but we are committed to proven, high-level practices because students and families deserve it.”

The Grand Haven Schools Foundation has been a gracious ally by supporting targeted purchases that directly support student learning. “Using an application process, we enjoyed awarding \$11,500 in mini grants that directly funded the teachers’ winning requests,” shares Susan Bays, GHSF executive director.

“We worked closely with principals and instructional coaches to identify and fund important common requests as well,” says Bays. Among them are decodable books for early-elementary classrooms, math recovery professional development, and hand-on math manipulatives for elementary classrooms.

“We are doing things because of them that we wouldn’t be able to do on our own,” says Evink. “We appreciate how mindful the foundation is about using their resources in ways that directly benefit Grand Haven students.”



On behalf of more than 850 GHAPS teachers
and staff, and 5,300 students and their
families attending our 11 preK-12 schools...

Thank you, Grand Haven!

Grand Haven is proud of its Bucs. You cheer us on at school events. You donate generously and participate in our fundraisers. You volunteer. You partner with our teachers and schools, all to the benefit of students.

In May, you voted Yes to support the GHAPS non-homestead operating millage. This education funding has been in place at its current level of 18 mills for more than 20 years and has historically received overwhelming support. This year was no exception, as 65% of voters said Yes to the annual renewal.

Thank you for continuing to support Success for All at Grand Haven Area Public Schools.

